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**A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY ON COMMUNITY ANTENNA
TELEVISION (CATV)**

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by

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Community antenna television (CATV) or cable television or just cable is a concept about as old as television itself. Since television transmissions are electromagnetic in nature, it is just as sensible (or more so) to transmit television via wires and cables as it is to broadcast through the air. Indeed, since the propagation of electromagnetic waves through a gas (air) takes more power than it does to transmit through a solid (the wires in a cable), it would appear that cable TV has a distinct advantage over air-broadcast television.

Many areas of the nation have poor reception to television, either because of topography or of distance from the nearest transmitter. Cable got its start when private corporations would construct a large antenna which would receive the distant/blocked-out pictures, amplify them, and rebroadcast them to the community via cable. Since less power is involved, a lower cost is incurred by this method over the original broadcaster. Pictures were much clearer since atmospheric disturbances such as storms do not affect cable transmission

the same as broadcast pictures. Finally, since the cable represents a closed system between the cable transmitter and the subscriber, less outside interference and lower power requirements mean that the cable can offer a wider variety of channels than can broadcast television.

Municipal governments become involved in cable TV operations when the cable operator wants to run his cable lines from transmitter to subscriber, either along poles or underground. In either case, since use of the public streets and byways in the municipality is indicated, and since most state legislatures which have addressed themselves to cable TV have defined the same as a public utility, the city government has jurisdiction over the cable TV operator. This jurisdiction appears in the form of franchises, that is, a setting forth by the government of the areas in which any one cable operation may be established without competition or interference from any other operator. For this privilege the cable TV firm pays the city a percentage of gross revenues, usually between one and three percent per year.

A cable system can be as large or as small as the operating firm desires, and consequently many applications of the system can be utilized in a variety of ways. Of course, the original motivation of cable TV was the rebroadcast of commercial television. However, the system is also ideal for the broadcasting of national and local educational programs, and small community systems are the basis for fostering and amplifying "neighborhood" concepts through limited-area broadcasts.

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Additionally, the following applications have been envisioned for cable TV systems: inter-hospital medical/diagnostic systems; shopping services; use by power and gas companies to read meters without sending out meter-readers (human variety); alarm systems hooked directly into police and fire station switchboards; access to computers, given a keyboard attachment to the television set; continuous, off-the-wire news programs; continuous stock market ticker tape broadcasts; newspapers, magazines, mail and telegrams delivered to the home via a facsimile machine attached to the TV set; continuous monitoring of public service vehicles by sensors located at various points along the cable; and municipal affairs broadcasts, to increase the citizen's involvement with local government.

Indeed, this lattermost application is becoming reality as municipal corporations are requiring franchise grantees, as a condition of the franchise, to set aside one channel for municipal affairs. Jacksonville, Florida broadcasts all of its city council meetings.

This topic has importance not only to the urban researcher, but to the average person who lives in a city contemplating the granting of cable TV franchises. A great deal of competition is found among franchise seekers, who see an opportunity to tape the local advertising markets through low-cost

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commercials made possible by lower-cost broadcasting. Great care must be taken to see that any franchise granted offers the maximum benefits for the operator, the city, and the subscriber jointly.

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Literally hundreds of articles, mostly of a "news" character, have appeared in the above-named periodicals over the last 25 years. These articles can certainly give the reader a feeling for public awareness and response to cable TV developments, and for the most part they reflect the industry's attitude towards cable TV.

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